

**Table 2** Characteristics (similarities and differences in history and investigations) of asthma and COPD as published in the GOLD/GINA joint statement on ACOS in 2016 (9)

Feature	Features that favor asthma or COPD	
	Favors Asthma	Favors COPD
Age of onset	Onset before age 20 years	Onset after age 40 years
Pattern of respiratory symptoms	Variation in symptoms over minutes, hours or days	Persistence of symptoms despite treatment
	Symptoms worse during the night or early morning	Good and bad days but always daily symptoms and exertional dyspnea
	Symptoms triggered by exercise, emotions including laughter, dust or exposure to allergens	Chronic cough and sputum preceded onset of dyspnea, unrelated to triggers
Lung function	Record of variable airflow limitation (spirometry, peak flow)	Record of persistent airflow limitation (post-bronchodilator FEV <sub>1</sub> /FVC <0.7)
Lung function between symptoms	Lung function normal between symptoms	Lung function abnormal between symptoms
	Previous doctor diagnosis of asthma	Previous doctor diagnosis of COPD, chronic bronchitis or emphysema
	Family history of asthma and other allergic conditions	Heavy exposure to a risk factor: tobacco smoke, biomass fuels
Time course	No worsening of symptoms over time. Symptoms vary either seasonally, or from year to year	Symptoms slowly worsening over time (progressive course over years)
	May improve spontaneously or have an immediate response to bronchodilator or to inhaled corticosteroids over weeks	Rapid-acting bronchodilator treatment provides only limited relief
Chest X-ray	Normal	Severe hyperinflation

\*, Syndromic diagnosis of airways disease: how to use the table: the columns list features that, when present, best distinguish between asthma and COPD. For a patient, count the number of check boxes in each column. If three or more boxes are checked for either asthma or COPD, that diagnosis is suggested. If there are similar numbers of checked boxes in each column, the diagnosis of ACOS should be considered. Copyright 2016 Global Initiative for Asthma and 2016 Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease, reprinted with permission.